Presentation to the

Planning community of Practice

Using virtual tours to evaluate ecosystem restoration alternatives

by

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Planner, rock island district

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Background

- The Continuing Authorities Program provides the opportunity to work with “non-traditional” sponsors
- Lake Belle View Feasibility Study presented a unique opportunity to work with multiple stakeholders on a complex project
- This presentation shares information on how to better serve these sponsors

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Existing Conditions

- Village of Belleville, Wisconsin requested assistance solve a water resource problem on the Sugar River and Lake Belle View…in the heart of the village
- Points of contact were private citizens

- To solve the problem it was necessary to formulate innovative alternatives
- Project stakeholders and public needed to be actively engaged in the planning process
- Aesthetics very important

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Problem

- How to tell the story…
  - so the layperson understands it?
  - without patronizing or “talking down”?
  - without losing creditability with other agencies?
  - so progress is made?

- How to build consensus?
- How to merge seemingly conflicting goals?

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Communication Tools

- Power Point “sketches” to formulate alternatives instead of engineering drawings

- Monthly conference calls in the evenings for maximum participation and regular check-in points

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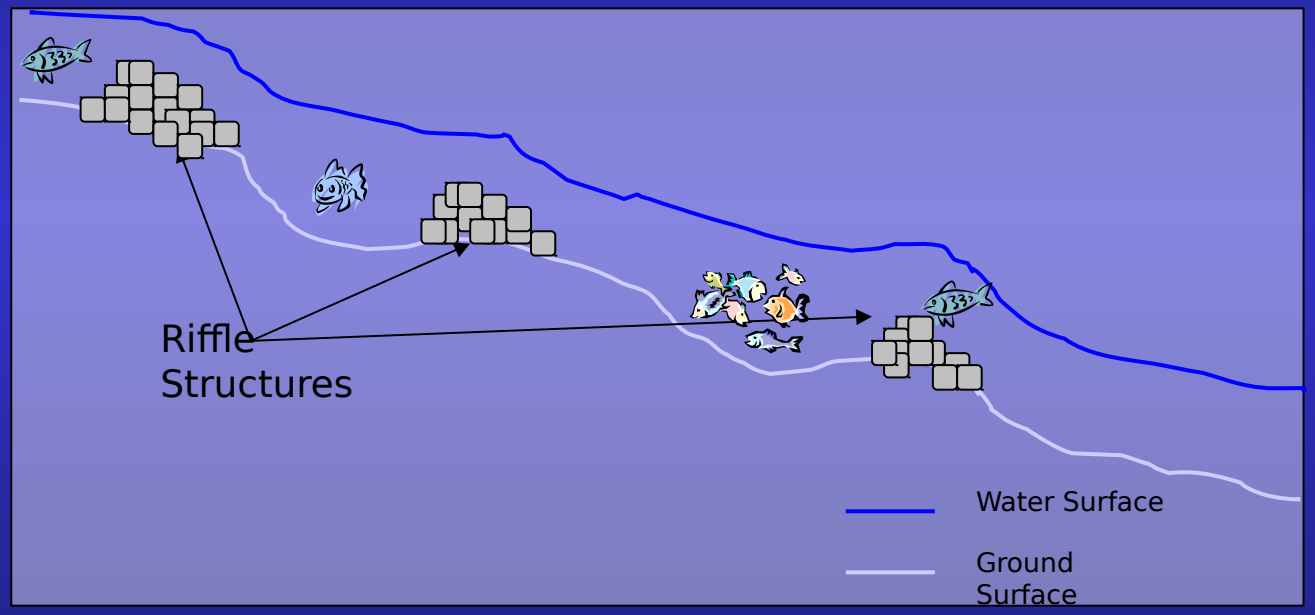
Communication Tools

- Sketches and real life photos to explain features instead of engineering drawings



- Early public meetings and establishment of project web site

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Communication Tools

- Sponsor chose to seek public input on two “Best Buy Plans” to decide the locally preferred plan
- The team needed to succinctly show the impacts of the plans
- Developed virtual tour to show before and after views of b

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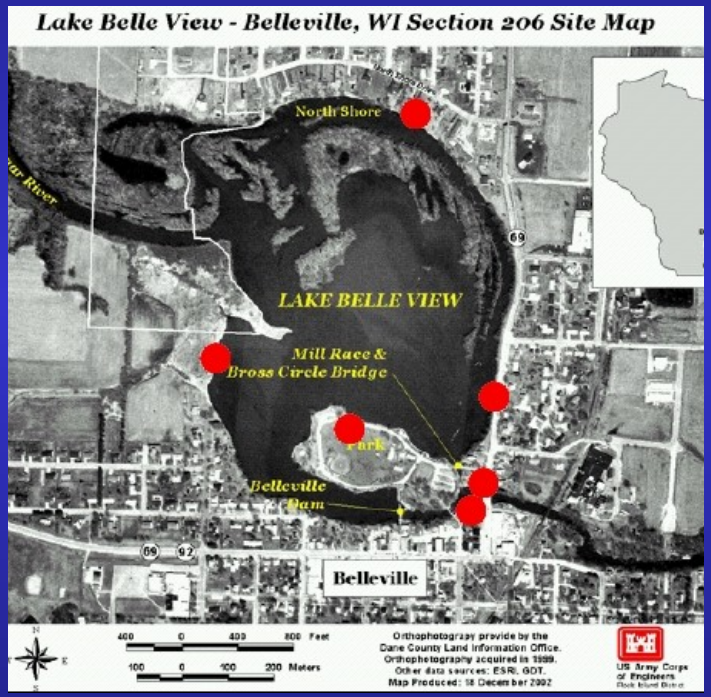
Virtual Tour – Development

- Used combination of familiar and new technology
- 360-degree panoramas were taken with special camera at six locations
- Views were modified to show impact of proposed plans
- Result was tour showing before and after views from the six locations



Virtual Tour L ink

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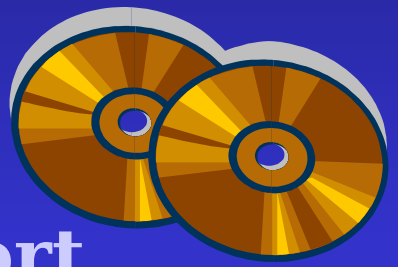
Virtual Tour - Application

- Shown at stakeholder and public meetings
- Posted to project's website
- Distributed on CD with report
- Facilitated discussion of plan impacts
- Allowed evaluation of impacts to aesthetics
- Ultimately [illegible]nsus among stakeholders



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Lessons Learned

- Develop tour earlier in the project
- Use the virtual tool as formulation tool, not just for evaluation
- Expand concept to still photos and posters

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Before and After

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Before and After

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Lessons Learned

- Tailor delivery to your audience
- Don’t underestimate the value of your visual aides
- Be sensitive to aesthetics

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Key Take Away Points

- Essential to develop “non-traditional” tools to communicate with “non-traditional” sponsors
- Be sensitive to your audience
- The public <u>expects</u> technology
- Virtual tours are valuable tools for complicated ecosystem restoration projects

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THANK YOU!